3: Wallace & Hoebel E-4, 5 (1933, 1945) 1952
NO6 Comanche NO6

The Comanches

883 As boys began to approach adolescence, there were a couple of years when they drew away from girls and ceased to play their childish games with them. They ran loose in gangs, racing, hunting, wrestling, and swimming. As their fathers stole stock, they rustled food from the camp. At night they liked to go armed with ropes and cut out riding horses from the herd to joyride on the prairie. If anyone discovered them, all they had to do was to get off and scatter. They were not encouraged by adults in these escapades; neither were they scolded. Their high spirits were tolerated, for that is as a Comanche should be, and marauding youngsters at night were a useful guard against enemy raiders.

593 As the boy grew into adolescence, the normal Comanche pattern demanded extreme brother-sister avoidance, even to the extent of isolating the unmarried adolescent boy in a separate tipi set up behind his parents' lodge. Here he prepared to receive power away from the contaminating grease of cooking utensils, while he was also isolated from incestuous temptation. The brother and sister could never sit close to or touch each other.[7] This social tabu was elaborated to the point where a young man might kill his sister without suffering any social disgrace or punishment if she insisted on violating it.[8]

882 If an older boy became unruly, disrespectful, or insolent, some of the older men made him the subject of cutting sarcasm. It usually was on such an occasion that the youth could not withdraw or save his face. This form of punishment was successful in most cases. Eventually, the youth learned to conduct himself with dignity and in accordance with the social norm set by his elders. Occasionally there was a wrangle between children, but they were allowed to fight it out to the amusement of the onlookers.

881 About the time a boy retired to his own tipi, he went out on his first real buffalo hunt, and should success crown his first effort, it might be an occasion for some kind of celebration. Usually a boy learned to hunt buffalo before going on the warpath. When he had shown his ability as a hunter, he was ready and eager to go on the warpath, for most boys wished to be brave and to win war honors.

[7] Informant: See How Deep the Water Is.

[8] Informant: Kills Something. Kill Something's brother-in-law shot his sister for entering his room after he had warned her not to enter.

32: Gilles O,X-3 (1902-c.1910) 1974
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These young Indians had
spent less time on horseback and more time inside, out of the weather; nor had they ever ridden the war trails. The women of this group took better care of their hair. The older women's hair generally had an untidy look.

This sullen aloofness and aimless drifting didn't affect the younger children—it seemed to set in when a boy got to be fifteen or sixteen years old. The younger children, when they arrived home on vacation were bursting with energy. They rode their ponies helter-skelter over the prairies and rivaled the channel cat in Cache Creek with their cavorting, swimming, and diving.

They came to town with their parents—the girls riding in a hack or the little lumber wagon with the women. If it was the wagon, the bows and canvas cover converted it into a little prairie schooner. On a nice day the canvas would be rolled up a ways on either side, to let the air through.

Comanche men and boys never rode in the wagon or hack with the women. The boys would be riding along with their father, horseback. If there were not enough stock saddles to go around, the younger boys would be riding ancient Mexican-type saddles. These Mexican saddles had a flat look, compared to the up-to-date stock saddle. Neither the fork nor the cantle was as high, while the seat was broader. Its most distinguishing feature was the top of the fork. Thin, broad, and round, it made one think of a pancake. I am sure the tops of some of the horns were as much as four inches across.

Somehow, the youngsters always had a few nickels to spend for candy, cakes, and wax—their name for all kinds of chewing gum. The happy parents stood around and glowed in their pride. Sometimes the parents had one of the youngsters show off—they would have one of the boys interpret as they bought their groceries or other store items. They wanted everyone in the store to see how much their children had learned.

But all this youthful, happy exuberance suddenly vanished in the late teens. Few of the girls stayed in school as long as the boys, and the girls never got the good from their Carlisle clothes. About the second or third time they came to the store after their last year in school, they would buy some gay-colored, patterned calico along with matching cotton braid. The next time you saw them, they would be wearing a *pit-si-qui-na*.

The young men did wear out their white man's clothes, but seem-

32: Gilles O,X-3 (1902-c.1910) 1974
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883 177 [291] ingly remembered none of the white man's ways. And they seemed to have forgotten the old tribal ways as well.

In my thinking, I found it convenient to put the women and girls 562 191 in yet another group. One of the first things I learned was the taboo which prevented women and girls from talking to men, Indians or white, other than their own menfolks, excepting on the most necessary [123] occasions. Because of this I never addressed them unless they spoke to me.

124 [122] I was consciously making every effort to learn as much of the language as I could, and in time I was able to catch on quickly to what the men were talking about and to follow their conversation. [198] But the women seemed to have a vocabulary of their own. I would often listen to a group of women talking in the store, or out in the camp, but I could distinguish only an occasional word.

657 871 Those who conceived of educating the Indian youths also conceived the idea that the educating must be done in faraway places, and little has been done through the years to change the practice. [171] Even as I type this article, several hundred Indian children from New Mexico, Arizona, and other western states are attending Chilocco Indian School in northern Oklahoma.

657 871 177 While in Carlisle or other Indian boarding schools, Indian children had slept in clean beds with sheets changed every week. They had sat in chairs at a table with a clean tablecloth and had eaten food served from clean dishes. They had been taught the use of the knife, fork, 178 and spoon. But when the Indian boy arrived home for good, he had only his parents' camp to go to. Though the Comanche families were living on their allotments, they continued to live a camp life, much the same as they had lived the previous twenty-five years as Reservation Indians.

352 264 In this camp our Carlisle graduate sat on the ground, or a log, or a goods box. He ate his food from a pie tin and was served directly from the kettle in which the food had been cooked. If a boy was lucky, he had a fork and spoon to go along with his pocketknife as eating utensils.

513 [342] Spring, summer, and fall they all slept in the brush arbor on platforms and under seldom-washed cotton blankets. When the northers became blue and came with regularity, they slept in conventional tents, either on the ground or on low platforms constructed with 342 poles. Once in a while, as I rode on my collection trips, I would see a